DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 119 287 95 EA 007 901

TITLE	Textbook Selection and Controversy. The Best of ERIC, Number 16.
INSTITUTION	Oregon Univ., Eugene. ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management.
SPONS AGENCY	National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Mar 76
CONTRACT	OEC-0-8-0-080353-3514
NOTE	5p.
AVAILABLE FROM	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon 97403 (free)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS	*Annotated Bibliographies; *Censorship; Educational Research; Educational Resources; Elementary Secondary Education; *Literature Reviews; Publications; *Textbook Bias; Textbook Content; Textbooks; *Textbook Selection

ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography summarizes 11 selected publications concerned with the general topic of textbook content and selection. The selections are intended to give practicing educators easy access to the most significant and useful information on school textbooks that is available from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC). All the publications described here were selected from the ERIC catalogs "Resources in Education" (RIE) and "Current Index to Journals in Education" (CIJE). Information on how to order copies of all the cited publications through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service is also included. (JG)

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Number 16 March 1976

The Best of ERIC

Clearinghouse on Educational Management

The Best of ERIC presents annotations of ERIC literature on important topics in educational management.

The selections are intended to give the practicing educator easy access to the most significant and useful information available from ERIC. Because of space limitations, the items listed should be viewed as representative, rather than exhaustive, of literature meeting those criteria.

Materials were selected for inclusion from the ERIC catalogs *Resources in Education (RIE)* and *Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE).*

This bibliography was prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management for distribution by the American Association of School Administrators and the Association of California School Administrators.

Textbook Selection and Controversy

Campbell, Ellen K. "Content Analysis: A Tool for Choosing Texts." Toronto: Department of Measurement and Evaluation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. ***Evaluation and Measurement Newsletter,*** 17 (September 1973), pp. 1-4. ED 100 964.

Thorough content analysis of textbooks can assist school districts in choosing ethnically and sexually unbiased materials, according to Campbell. She outlines some of the research that identifies textbook bias. This research represents "the attempt to develop quantitative measures of textbook content to replace the largely subjective 'personal impression' approach."

The research she reviews indicates that not only can bias in texts have potentially negative effects on self-concept development, but that it can affect academic achievement as well. For example, one study in Denver discovered a direct correlation between the content of reading stories for six-year-olds and a reading achievement lag for six-year-old boys. The stories emphasized boy characters who tried (and failed) to accomplish certain goals.

Another study surveyed 134 elementary reading texts from 14 publishers. Its results indicated a much higher proportion of male-oriented stories. As Campbell states, the authors of this study "make the case that reading texts perpetuate stereotypes of masculine and feminine behavior."

The research provides samples of the kinds of bias that textbook selection committees should watch for. Campbell recommends that such committees conduct their own surveys of content, that they compare children's interests with story content, and that they carefully evaluate the relationship between illustrations and written content for discrepancies and redundancy.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $1.58. Specify ED number.

Donelson, Kenneth, ed. ***The Students' Right to Read. 1972 Edition.*** Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1972. 26 pages. ED 068 990.

To protect students' right to read a variety of educationally valid materials, the National Council of Teachers of English recommends a two-step procedure. First, textbook selection must be thorough, anticipating and answering possible censor objections. The department should write (and file with the administration) "a statement explaining why literature is taught and how books are chosen for each class." Each teacher should give (in writing) "a rationale for any book to be read by an entire class." And everyone involved in textbook selection should be well acquainted with state laws governing both selection of and attacks on texts.

Second, a committee composed of teachers, administrators, "and possibly students, parents, and other representatives from the community" should work to inform and gain the support of citizens who are interested in education. Many times schools fail to nurture support among community members who are favorable to "an atmosphere of free inquiry."

This committee would be charged with receiving complaints. The "would-be censor" is requested to fill out a written form to be submitted to the committee. The committee then meets with both the teacher involved and the complainant, ruling on the validity of the complaint. It makes its recommendation to the superintendent and, through him, to the school board, which has ultimate authority to decide whether or not the books under question will be removed from the curriculum.

Although the tone of this paper seems a bit paranoid in places, its basic procedure for handling (and, in some cases, heading off) censorship cases is sound and is used by many schools.

Order copies from National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801. Single copy $0.60 member, $0.70 nonmember. Quantity discounts.
Also available from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $1.95. Specify ED number.

Fuller, Ralph N. "Textbook Selection: Burning Issue?" ***Compact,*** 9, 3 (June 1975), pp. 6-8. EJ 119 230.

In textbook selection, "public involvement can make consensus almost unattainable," according to this review of selection methods and controversies. In such states as Texas that incorporate lay participation and comment into the statewide selection process, "public objection to textbooks is a perennial thing," according to state education officials interviewed by Fuller. Lay participation on either the state or district level seems to invite conflict, since the majority of voiced reactions are generally negative, as Fuller states.

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Unlike other observers (see ***Censoring Textbooks: Is West Virginia the Tip of the Iceberg?***) who focus on the common interests and value systems shared by procensorship groups across the nation, Fuller views textbook controversies as localized occurrences. He maintains that such conflicts are isolated phenomena "reflecting local concerns—not statewide issues."

For this reason, according to Fuller, the West Virginia state legislature failed to enact any of the legislation introduced as a result of the Kanawha County conflict. Both protextbook and antitextbook forces desired state action. The bills under consideration would have given the state rather than the individual districts power to select secondary, as well as elementary, texts. And the proposed legislation would have allowed lay participation in text selection at the state level. Fuller states that the bills were rejected by the legislature because "the sentiment of most state senators was that the problem was local and did not merit state action."

George Washington University. ***Censoring Textbooks: Is West Virginia the Tip of the Iceberg? A Transcript of "Options on Education," December 11, 1974.*** Washington, D.C.: Institute for Educational Leadership, 1974. 16 pages. ED 105 518.

This radio broadcast explores the dynamics of the conflicting philosophies underlying the Kanawha County, West Virginia, book-banning conflict. The compilers of the program interviewed those on both sides of the issue. Protestors included fundamentalist ministers opposed to the textbooks, school board member Alice Moore (one of the leaders of the antitextbook forces), and out-of-state protestors who came to Kanawha to assist local antitextbook groups.

On the side favoring use of the texts, the president of the National Education Association, a representative of the National Council of Teachers of English, and Kanawha teachers were interviewed. Parents, students, and school administrators discussed why they assumed protext or antitext positions.

It is clear from this examination that the controversy spawned in Kanawha County is far from a purely local phenomenon, though the violence and certainly the national press coverage do set it apart, as the program compilers note. The presence in Kanawha and elsewhere of antitextbook protestors representing national groups favorable to censorship has led some observers to "charge that they [the protests] are financed and controlled from outside the communities."

But the philosophical split between protext and antitextbook forces in Kanawha is definitely a national split as well. According to one interviewee, the basic difference is between "humanism" and "absolutism." According to the program compilers, "Protestors believe that public schools ought to teach one single true value system. The Pro-Textbook forces believe that public schools must teach ***about*** many different value systems."

This transcript offers a well-balanced, dispassionate view of the issues as those involved in the controversy perceive them.

Order MF from EDRS, $0.76. Specify ED number. HC not available.

Hepburn, Mary A. "A Case of Creeping Censorship, Georgia Style." ***Phi Delta Kappan***, 55, 9 (May 1974), pp. 611-613. EJ 096 041.

Hepburn documents the influence wielded by the Georgia Basic Education Council, a small special interest group, on the state textbook selection process. The council, which has no official status, succeeded in getting the Georgia State Board of Education to represent the council's interests in two important instances relating to text selection.

The selection process begins, according to state law, with the Professional Textbook Committee, composed of teachers representing each congressional district. This committee is charged with evaluating texts and ranking them according to specific educational criteria. Although the state board makes the final decision, traditionally the board had approved the textbook list generated by the committee, as Hepburn notes.

But in 1971, the Basic Education Council initiated an attack on a 10-book social studies inquiry series edited by Edwin Fenton, a well-known textbook compiler. This series was ranked very high according to the textbook committee's criteria. Initially, only one state board member, working closely with the chairman of the education council, voted against the Professional Textbook Committee's choice of these texts. However, "with outside pressure" from the council, the board finally voted 5 to 4 to remove the series from the approved list, as Hepburn states.

The council's influence was felt again in the issue of making the teaching of creationist theory mandatory in public school science classes. The Basic Education Council mounted an intense lobbying effort, directed at both the legislature and the state board of education. Although the bill failed to gain legislative support, the council did succeed in getting the state board to include creationist materials on the textbook list, even though these materials had not been approved by the Professional Textbook Committee and even though the ordinary text selection process had been violated.

Iowa State Department of Public Instruction. ***Guidelines for the Evaluation and Selection of Textbooks and Other Instructional Materials.*** Des Moines, Iowa: 1969. 9 pages. ED 070 088.

Iowa does not adopt textbooks on a statewide basis. Selection is left to local school boards. However, these state guidelines are intended to make the selection process efficient and to keep potential controversy at a minimum.

The state department of public instruction recommends that curriculum development always precede textbook selection. "Textbooks should not determine curriculum."

The district administration should involve teachers, subject matter specialists, and other "qualified" persons in the selection process. A committee composed of these specialists should make "a regular, continuing study of textbooks," incorporating the latest products of "project centers." And this committee should be constantly aware of community attitudes.

The basic texts of a course should, according to these guidelines, be bolstered by "supplemental materials." And it is in the selection of these materials, including "biases" and "controversial materials," that the potential for conflict is highest. To guard against controversy, the selection committee, as well as the individual teacher, should make sure that "controversial" materials are "reliable" and "consistent with curricular goals." Administrators and supervisors must be "aware of the possible ramifications of providing such materials for classroom use."

These guidelines provide for no direct consultation with nonprofessional community members. But they do emphasize awareness of local attitudes and biases.

Order from EDRS. MF $0.76 HC $1.58. Specify ED number.

O'Donnell, James J. "Censorship and the Publishers." ***NASSP Bulletin,*** 59, 391 (May 1975), pp. 59-63. EJ 118 708.

"All publishers are acutely aware of the pitfalls, even contradictions, in preparing materials for the educational marketplace," according to O'Donnell, executive director of Xerox Education Publications. On the one hand, schools demand materials that are "motivational" and "challenging," while on the other, these very same materials are seen by some as too controversial "or just too novel."

The educational publishing business is thus somewhat of a risky one, as O'Donnell points out. The amount of money necessary to turn out one textbook series is staggering. Therefore, companies try to fit their texts to the demands of their various audiences and still maintain high educational standards. Sometimes these two goals are incompatible.

When textbooks are attacked, the role of the publisher in such a controversy requires tact and careful consideration of consequences. O'Donnell points out that full-fledged publisher support of school district textbook defenders can appear as a "conspiracy" to squelch opposition and can work to the disadvantage of text supporters. However, the publisher must be prepared to support his text with background information on "methods of research" and "possible prejudices of the authors and editors."

For obvious reasons, O'Donnell is against censorship, although he advocates the generation of high quality textual materials. His perspective as a textbook publisher provides an interesting slant on textbook controversy.

"Sex Is Back in School." ***American School Board Journal,*** 160, 5 (May 1973), pp. 25-27, 37-44. EJ 075 621.

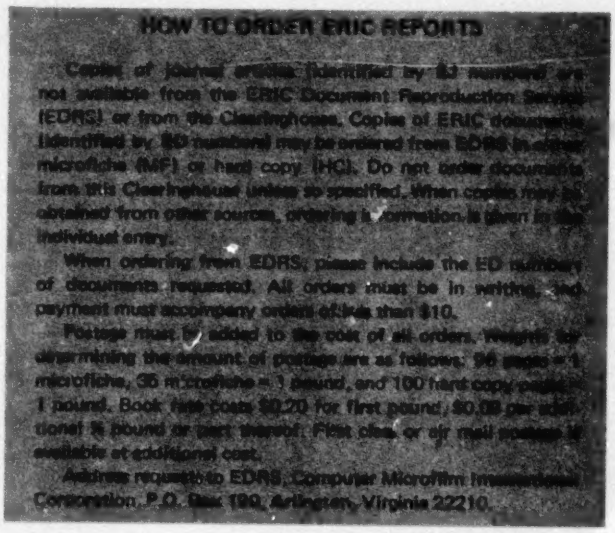
The book-banning conflict in Ridgefield, Connecticut, resulted in the firing of the superintendent, threats against teachers who used controversial materials in their classes, and unmitigated bad feelings that split this small town, according to this article.

The conflict surfaced when one parent stated objections to two books (Cleaver's ***Soul on Ice*** and a sociology text, ***Police, Courts and the Ghetto).*** Instead of following its official procedure, the school board allowed this parent to register his complaint immediately and directly with the board, thereby circumventing intermediate complaint steps and calling the public's attention to the complaint right away.

The press, according to this article, "gave the issue banner headlines," which attracted the attention of procensorship groups outside the community (such as the John Birch Society and Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade). The conflict escalated, and the school board and superintendent were caught in the cross fire.

The school administration could have prevented the conflict from developing as rapidly and violently as it did, according to this article, if it had insisted that the official complaint process be followed and if the board had not allowed itself to be drawn into, and divided by, the book controversy. According to this critique, "When a school board allows itself to become a combatant in a book banning war, it turns its leadership over to other forces."

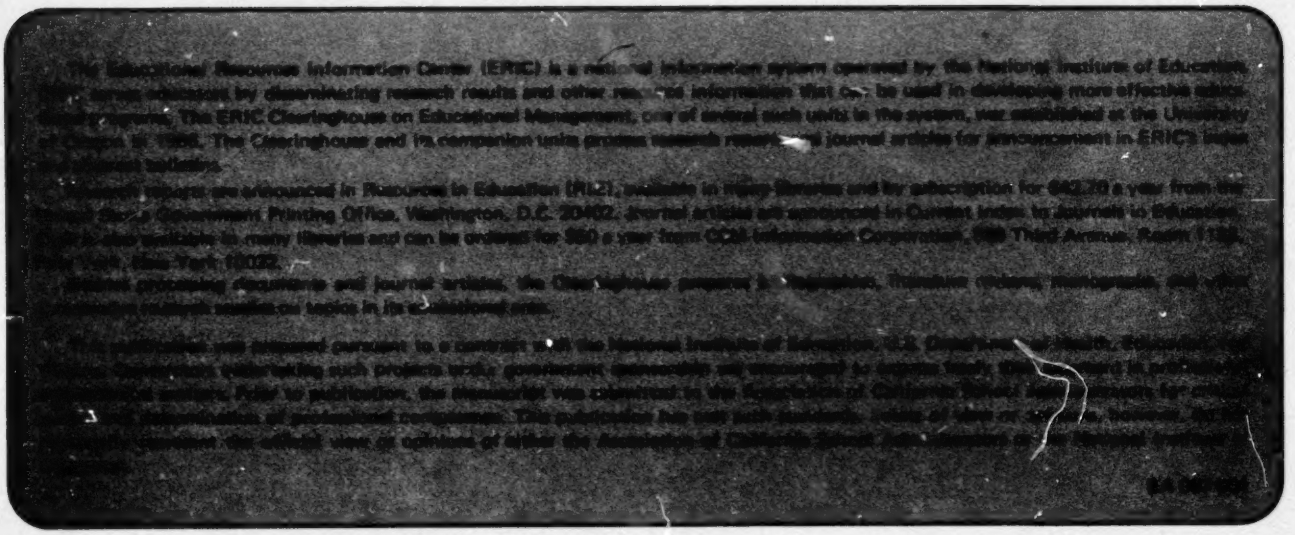
Obviously, hindsight is accurate, but this anatomy of administrative failure in the face of textbook controversy offers valuable lessons to other districts faced with similar conflicts.



Stoddard, Ann H. "The Minority Group Image in Textbooks." Paper presented at National Council for the Social Studies Regional Conference, Virginia Beach, April 1975. 11 pages. ED 106 209.

According to Stoddard, the way textbooks represent minority groups and their histories and cultures must be carefully analyzed before selection takes place. She conceives of textbooks as "social change agents," capable, albeit in a small way, of preparing students to live in "a culturally pluralistic society." To accomplish this goal, textbooks must be selected that give as complete a picture of the "real world" as possible. And included in her definition of the "real world" are the culture and history of ethnic minority groups.

In the past, texts failed to deal adequately with minority groups for two reasons. First, the textbook industry lost money on "multi-ethnic texts" when it first produced them. School districts wished to avoid texts that might arouse controversy, according to Stoddard. And second, even though educators argued that "teachers really made the difference, not the materials," teachers were trained to reinforce racial and ethnic biases embodied in textual materials.



Stoddard outlines three "general criteria to judge the adequacy of textbooks," and she suggests that school districts and state boards apply these criteria to texts under consideration. First, "historical facts must be interpreted fairly and in the light of current historical research." Second, texts should realistically present the accomplishments of minorities in the past and present. And third, textbooks should "convey that certain values are intrinsically a part of the American system" (such as "justice and equality of opportunity," and "the dignity and worth of the individual").

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"Textbook Battles: They're Brewing and Bubbling: By Fall They'll Be Boiling. Don't You Get Scalded." ***American School Board Journal,*** 162, 7 (July 1975), pp. 21-28. EJ 120 816.

These helpful hints on how to avoid full-fledged textbook conflicts are more elaborate than those proposed by Donelson and other writers. But their purpose is the same—to provide recourse for complainants without compromising in any way the educational goals of the school. The authors of this article interviewed school administrators in districts all over the country that have faced textbook protests. Their suggestions thus carry a certain authority.

In addition to putting into writing the educational goals of the district, "guidelines for the selection and purchase of instructional materials" should be written and circulated among parents and community members. As part of "a vigorous public relations program," citizens should be involved in the textbook selection process. Their presence will help educators to define the needs and attitudes of the community.

This article warns school administrators to watch out for deceptive practices followed by some textbook protestors. For example, either "offensive" material is quoted out of context or quotations are taken from books that the school district isn't even considering. District officials and teachers should be prepared to counter such misinformation with accurate, easy-to-understand reasons for the selection of specific texts, along with copies of the texts themselves for public perusal.

Complaints should be put in writing. The authors suggest following up on the complaint forms handed out to potential protestors but not returned. According to some districts, the complainants who refuse to turn in the complaint forms were "the real troublemakers."

Wade, Nicholas. "Creationists and Evolutionists: Confrontation in California." ***Science,*** 178, 4062 (November 1972), pp. 724-729. EJ 066 756.

A "head-on confrontation between science and religion," reminiscent of the conflict leading to the 1925 Scopes trial, has plagued the California State Board of Education, charged with selecting science textbooks. The forces that advocate the inclusion in texts of the religious theory of creation have been led by the Creation Research Society, "an unusual association," according to Wade. This society is composed of members holding advanced degrees in natural science and who believe in the literal truth of the Biblical creation account.

The success of the "creationists" is attributable to their "subtle" approach, Wade claims. Instead of explicitly attacking Darwinian theory, they maintain that creation theory "is a valid and scholarly theory deserving equal attention with evolution in the teaching of science."

The success of the California creationists in winning concessions from the state board has led to speculation that similar controversies will arise in other parts of the country. As Wade points out, antievolution sentiment is still widespread. Publishers have felt pressure to play down evolution in their textbooks. And national creationist organizations have worked to influence textbook selection in other states.

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